

## **AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

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Change in Admissions Selectivity for Harris-Stowe State College  
Coordinating Board for Higher Education  
October 14, 2004

### **DESCRIPTION**

The Board of Regents of Harris-Stowe State College has made a strategic decision to change the institution's admissions category from "moderately selective" to "open-enrollment." The intent of this board item is to provide background information and rationale for this decision.

#### **Background**

Harris-Stowe State College traces its origin back to two 19<sup>th</sup> Century normal schools – the St. Louis Normal School and the Sumner Normal School. Admission to these two institutions was restricted to female high school graduates who ranked in the upper 10 percent of their graduating classes. Eventually these institutions evolved into Harris Teachers College and Stowe Teachers College, separately serving white and African American students respectively. Men began to be admitted to teacher education programs offered by these institutions in 1941. With the Supreme Court's historic Brown vs Board of Education decision, these two institutions were merged and became Harris-Stowe College. Sometime in the late 1960s Harris-Stowe became an "open-enrollment" institution. This designation was maintained until the early 1990s.

In 1992, Harris-Stowe sought approval to expand its mission. Notwithstanding its proud history of more than 100 years of service as a teacher education institution focused on elementary education, the institution faced problems of maintaining a critical mass of students and experienced administrative diseconomies of scale. In 1993, with approval by the Coordinating Board and the passage of Senate Bill 153, an expanded mission for Harris-Stowe was authorized to offer undergraduate degree programs with an emphasis on selected applied professional disciplines to meet the needs of the St. Louis metropolitan area. As a result of this change, new academic program areas in business administration, secondary education, and human services were targeted for development. During this same time period, Harris-Stowe declared a "moderately selective" admissions category and made a commitment to phase in higher admission requirements for entering students.

For the past 12 years, the board, faculty, administration, and staff of Harris-Stowe have worked collectively to implement an expanded mission by offering additional baccalaureate degrees in selected applied professions and to meet the standards set for a "moderately selective" institution. Throughout this time period, the college has experienced success in some areas while continuing to face challenges associated with the preparation level of entering students. At its June 2002 meeting, Coordinating

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Board members had an extensive discussion concerning Harris-Stowe's challenges in meeting the standards for a "moderately selective" institution and encouraged Harris-Stowe to reconsider its selectivity designation.

After extensive review, the college has determined that its "moderately selective" admissions requirements were having a detrimental effect on meeting the needs of a significant portion of adult learners interested in pursuing postsecondary education at the institution, thereby affecting the college's full-time enrollment and graduation rates. It is important to note that with this change in admissions requirements, Harris-Stowe State College will maintain its commitment to high academic standards and the achievement of academic excellence for all of its graduates. Harris-Stowe has also indicated that it will maintain as an admissions requirement the completion of the CBHE-approved core curriculum for recent high school graduates.

As part of its strategy for successful transition to an open-enrollment institution, the staff from Harris-Stowe is actively engaged in conversations with the two other public four-year "open-enrollment" institutions - Lincoln University and Missouri Western State College - to learn about successful strategies in working with under-prepared students. In addition, the following intervention programs, projects, and initiatives will be continued:

- Extensive academic support
- College preparatory academy for urban youth
- Supervision of academic programs and student progress
- Community outreach programs and collaborative initiatives
- Partnerships with local businesses, government, and educational institutions

### **Conclusions**

The decision by Harris-Stowe's Board of Regents to change the institution's admissions requirements to an "open-enrollment" institution was the result of lengthy discussion and thoughtful deliberation. This change will enhance the college's ability to effectively serve its students and the community by providing an accessible and affordable higher education experience. The college should be commended for its sound management decision.

### **STATUTORY REFERENCE**

Coordinating Board for Higher Education **Public Policies Affecting the Missouri Higher Education Delivery System**

Chapter II: Statewide Planning for Higher Education  
C: Institutional Mission Review

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

**It is recommended that the Coordinating Board for Higher Education commend the Board of Regents of Harris-Stowe State College for its decision to become an "open-enrollment"**

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**institution. It is further recommended that the Coordinating Board express its appreciation to Dr. Henry Givens for his leadership as president of Harris-Stowe State College and extend best wishes for a successful transition to an “open-enrollment” institution.**

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

None